

Edition: Edina

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The City of Edina



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Legend of 2016-2017 Priorities:

- Focused Redevelopment
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Planning for the Future
- Enterprise Facilities
- Intergovernmental Relations

City of Edina Directory

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Council Member Bob Stewart 952-833-9559
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Scott Neal952-826-0401

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Lisa Schaefer952-826-0416

Communications & Technology

Services Director

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Cary Teague.....952-826-0460

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Eric Roggeman..... 952-826-0414

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Tom Schmitz952-826-0332

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Parks & Recreation Director

Ann Kattreh.....952-826-0430

Police Chief

Dave Nelson952-826-0467

Public Works Director

Brian Olson 952-826-0311

City Keeps Taxes Low For Property Owners

Edina maintains low municipal property taxes, with a current average of \$1,086 for a \$400,000 home, a nearly 5 percent decrease from 2014. Put in context, this is less than half the municipal property taxes for a home in Richfield or Hopkins of the same value.

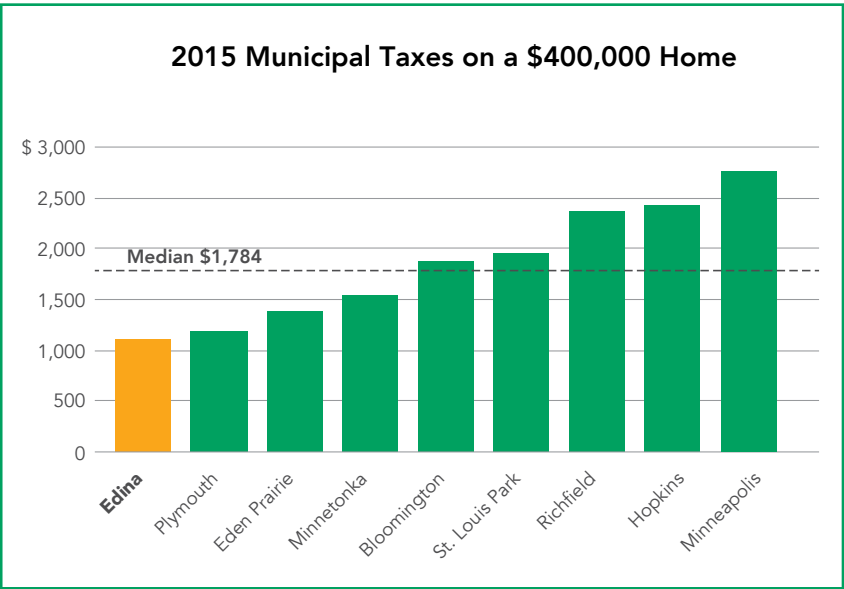
The City’s low municipal property taxes can be attributed to two major factors.

“Continued good financial management by the City Council and City staff and the continued increases in property values are the main reasons why taxes are low,” said Finance Director Eric Roggeman.

Thoughtful and intelligent planning by the City ensures municipal property taxes don’t needlessly rise. However, property value within the City is the most important factor in keeping City property taxes at bedrock levels.

“Edina’s strong tax base continues to grow due to the appreciation in existing property values, much of which is due to new construction and redevelopment,” said City Assessor Bob Wilson. “People want to live in Edina. They want to work in Edina. This raises property values, so that the rate of taxes on those properties stays low.”

Though the City’s property taxes are objectively low, illustrated through comparisons to other cities, there is a misperception reported by residents. The City’s biennial Quality of Life Survey administered in 2015 reports that nearly 55 percent of residents who took the survey thought property taxes are “somewhat high” or “very high.” More than 38 percent of residents thought their taxes were above average compared to neighboring cities.



This year’s average municipal property tax, compared to neighboring cities, shows that Edina’s taxes are low, according to the LMC property tax calculator using 2015 data.

“It is important for taxpayers to know where they stand in the greater Twin Cities with regard to their City tax burden,” said City Manager Scott Neal. “We work hard in city government to share this information because it is something we can be proud of, as well as something that helps the value of our local real estate.”

Wilson emphasized the fact that these lower municipal tax rates are not a recent phenomenon. Historically, Edina has proudly kept municipal property taxes low.

Residents also pay property taxes to Hennepin County, their local school district and watershed district.

For more information, contact Roggeman at 952-826-0414 or visit EdinaMN.gov/Finance.

Ehlers Serves as Municipal Financial Advisor to Edina

For more than 30 years, the City of Edina has worked with Ehlers, an independent financial advisory firm based in Minnesota. Ehlers works with City staff on a variety of projects, including redevelopment projects, state reporting, debt issuance and utility rate analysis.

“Ehlers advises the City on financing options and when we have a project that we want to do, they’ll advise on what our options are and even make recommendations as to what is the cheapest way for the City to finance a project,” said Finance Director Eric Roggeman.

Although Ehlers has a large team, Edina primarily works with Municipal Advisor Nick Anhut. Anhut, who started working for Ehlers in 2012, has a master’s degree in Public Policy, focusing on local government administration, and seven years of professional management experience as an Officer in the U.S. Army.

“We’re a municipal advisory firm focused on financial advisory work for the City and the Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA). Our company serves on a consulting basis to public entities like schools, counties, cities and sometimes the State,” said Anhut. “We also provide what we call economic development consulting, evaluating the need and negotiating public assistance relating to need within a city. When a developer comes in and says they need a certain type of assistance to help get their project started, we provide analysis and general consulting, evaluating whether or not that need is justified and mapping out a structure for negotiating that assistance.”

“Nick and the group at Ehlers advise us regarding redevelopment projects that involve public funds. So I’d also consider them tax-increment financing advisors,” said Economic Development Manager Bill Neuendorf. “They help us use the economic development tool and make sure we do so in accordance with State law. And when the City gets involved in funding a project, like 66 West apartments, they provide real estate development expertise to make sure any public funds are used responsibly and appropriately.”

While not all towns and cities employ a municipal financial advisor, it is commonplace for cities the size of Edina and larger to work with them. Many very large cities, like Minneapolis, have an in-house team. However, Edina staff finds the advice from an outside consulting firm extremely valuable.

“Ehlers has expertise in the State tax-increment financing laws. Some communities file all the reports in house, but we find that they have such a strong understanding of the law that we really use them as our go-to advisors for nearly everything that involves public finance,” said Neuendorf. “While they’re headquartered here in the Twin Cities, they have offices in other states as well, giving them a national perspective.”

“Nick has a lot of different clients that are like Edina. He can bring those good ideas from other cities to us. He has a deep knowledge of all the different operations within the City and has an understanding for what our goals are, what our history is and the things we’re trying to achieve,” added Roggeman.

Because debt is also an important factor in the City’s

overall financial portfolio, Anhut is quick to point out that they serve the role as a municipal consultant rather than a financial planner. Their role as an advisor is varied and diverse, covering everything from debt sales to managing public funds.

“Nick worked with me for several months on the City’s June bond sale. Part of that deal is to refund a debt that’s currently outstanding. Nick identified an opportunity for us to sell new debt at the new rates to pay off outstanding debt and save the City some money,” said Roggeman. “He helps on new debt as well. Through the debt sale, we’ll have roughly \$13.5 million that we’re going to use to reconstruct City streets and underground infrastructure.”

Anhut is able to provide a comprehensive recommendation for many projects because he’s thoroughly involved in lots of areas. In addition to his work on the debt sale, he also worked on the utility rate study in 2015. The study reviewed how much the City earns on water bills, while factoring in how much is spent on operations, building new utility infrastructure and rebuilding existing utility infrastructure. The study examined whether those priorities match up with the debt plans.

“We do a lot of the background analysis behind where the City is at financially and how to help structure their financial picture to reach the Council’s long-term plans,” said Anhut. “We’re trying to find cost-effective ways to get projects done, lower debt and find the cheapest possible way to issue debt to find the most economical, fair and cost-effective way to provide incentives to private development.”

In addition, Ehlers does a lot of the background research and investigation to help make informed decisions about street improvements, facility improvements, extensions to the golf course and long-term assistance to incentivize private development.

“We really enjoy working for the City and we value it; we’ve had a long-term relationship and it brings a lot of enjoyment on our side,” said Anhut. “We look forward to continuing the relationship and filling whatever role we need to. We like being a part of the team, and when Eric and Bill, in particular, reach out with general questions, we like being a part of that discussion.”

For more information about the City’s municipal financial advisors, contact Roggeman at 952-826-0414 or eroggeman@EdinaMN.gov.



Nick Anhut, an advisor with Ehlers, serves as the Municipal Financial Advisor for the City of Edina.

Edina Fast Facts

- Population – 50,261
- Per Capita Personal Income - \$61,984
- High School Graduation Rate – 97.9 percent (Source: U.S. Census Bureau for all of Hennepin County)



- Unemployment Rate – 2.82 percent (Source: State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development)
- Major Services – Police, Fire, EMS and Recreation



Edina Liquor Gets Creative to Pour More Back into the Community

The Edina Liquor tagline is, “Where profits get poured back into the community.” But what does that actually mean for Edina residents?

Since 1998, Edina Liquor has generated more than \$17.5 million in profits that have been used to support City services and amenities.

One hundred percent of Edina Liquor’s profits go directly back to residents by funding such beloved facilities as Braemar Arena, Braemar Golf Course and the Edina Art Center.

While total sales were down 7.5 percent and customer counts also dipped compared to 2014, 2015 still showed to be a profitable year for the operation. Expenses were down 4.6 percent compared to 2014. In 2015 alone, a total

of \$785,000 was provided to various City funds.

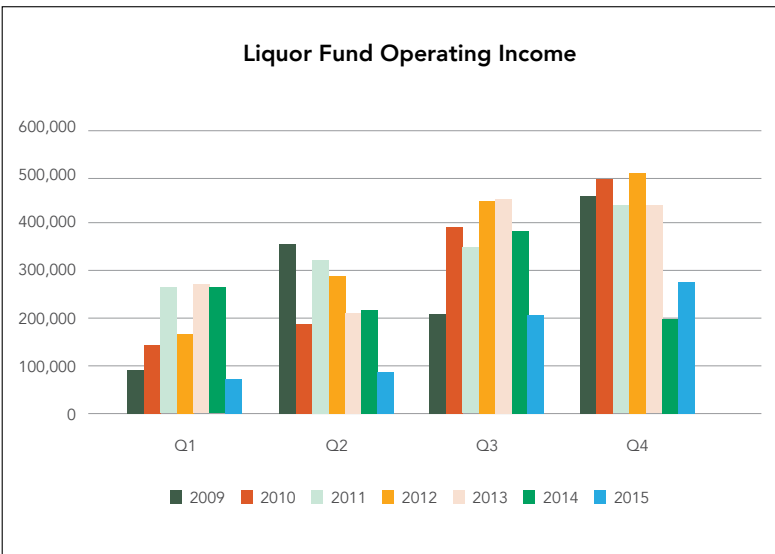
Edina Liquor has faced competition in recent years from area big-box stores and the growing brewery scene in the Twin Cities. To compete in this market, Edina Liquor has focused on providing better service to residents by extending store hours, improving customer service and product knowledge, offering a unique and relevant product selection, and having competitive pricing.

“Service, value and community support is what we’re about more than anything,” said Steve Grausam, Director of Liquor Operations. “Our customers tell us what products they like and want, and if it makes sense to bring in those products, we’ll do it. From wine, to bourbon, to craft beer, our sales and our selections always change with the times and are representative of the residents’ desires.”



Photo by Dana Rademacher

Edina Liquor made over \$12 million in sales in 2015, and has made an increasing effort to provide a better shopping experience for residents, including improving customer service and product knowledge.



The Finance Department tracks Edina Liquor’s operating income by quarter. While operating income was down in 2015 compared to 2014, Edina Liquor continues to be profitable and ended 2015 with an operating income in excess of \$640,000.

Although 2015 may have been a down year, Edina Liquor is not in a slump. In 2015, 13 percent of the City’s revenue came from Edina Liquor sales. As of April 2016, they have seen a turnaround, and are up in sales and customer counts by about 5 percent over 2015.

To address the concerns of decreasing profits the last couple of years, City Manager Scott Neal formed a Liquor Store Task Force that began meeting in February to offer recommendations and suggestions for new and creative opportunities for Edina Liquor operations.

“The task force’s work is continuing just as I’d hoped,” says Neal. “The members are working in small groups on focused topics. They are planning to put their small group work together in the form of a set of recommendations for my consideration. I’m looking forward to seeing what they’ve got to say.”

As of yet, no changes have been implemented from the conversations the Task Force has had, but some may be implemented after their findings are reported to the City Council later this summer.

“It’s important for Edina residents to understand that we represent the City and the community as a liquor operation. While it is a revenue source and we want to make a profit,” added Grausam, “it’s also here to serve the community.”

Aside from the government-operated facilities, Edina Liquor also supports multiple community events and organizations, such as the Edina Chamber of Commerce’s Taste of Edina, Rotary Clubs of Edina and Edina Morningside, a winter coat drive, and a summer supply drive to support local military families.

For more information on Edina Liquor, contact Grausam, 952-903-5732 or sgrausam@EdinaMN.gov.

What Is Tax-Increment Financing (TIF)?

Construction cranes and cement trucks in Edina signal the continued high level of redevelopment in the commercial areas of the city. While the vast majority of these new apartment and retail projects are privately funded, the City does not shy away from getting involved to attract more desirable developments that serve the long-term interests of the community.

Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) is the most common economic development tool used throughout the State of Minnesota and here in Edina to do so.

Edina has used TIF since the early 1980s. TIF was used to create the mixed-use projects at Centennial Lakes and Edinborough. Currently, the City has four active TIF districts – 66 West, Grandview 2, Pentagon Park and Southdale 2. Only the Southdale 2 District is actively collecting tax revenue. Collections in the other three districts begin in 2018 and 2019. This strategic and limited use of TIF is reflected in the fact that only 1.4 percent of the City’s tax base is included in a TIF district, according to the most recent numbers available from Ehlers, the City’s public finance advisor. This is far below the 15 percent maximum allowed by State law.

What is TIF?

Simply put, when TIF is used, future taxes paid by an upgraded property are pledged to pay for specific costs related to the project. These costs typically include public street improvements, structured parking, removal of environmental contamination and soil preparation. The taxes currently being paid, however, continue to be distributed to the school district, City, County and other government agencies.

“TIF can be a very complex tool that is used sparingly in Edina to achieve the best results in the long-term interest of the community,” said Bill Neuendorf, the City’s Economic Development Manager. “By long-term, we’re not talking about three or four years. We’re thinking about 20 to 30 years down the road, and how these properties can contribute toward the quality of life for the whole community.”

The mechanics of TIF are addressed in a complex section of Minnesota State Statute Chapter 469. When a TIF district is established, the current tax capacity of the properties is certified as the “original tax capacity.” As the property’s assessed value increases with the additional private investment, its new taxes above the original tax capacity are measured and referred to as the “captured tax capacity.” At the time the TIF district is created, the original tax rates applied by all local governments are also certified. In the years to follow, the “tax increment” is calculated by multiplying the captured tax capacity by the original tax rate. This calculation gives the increase in taxes that occur because of the new private investment.

These “incremental taxes” remain within the boundaries of the TIF district, while the “original taxes” are distributed to the local taxing agencies like the school district, City, County and other taxing districts.

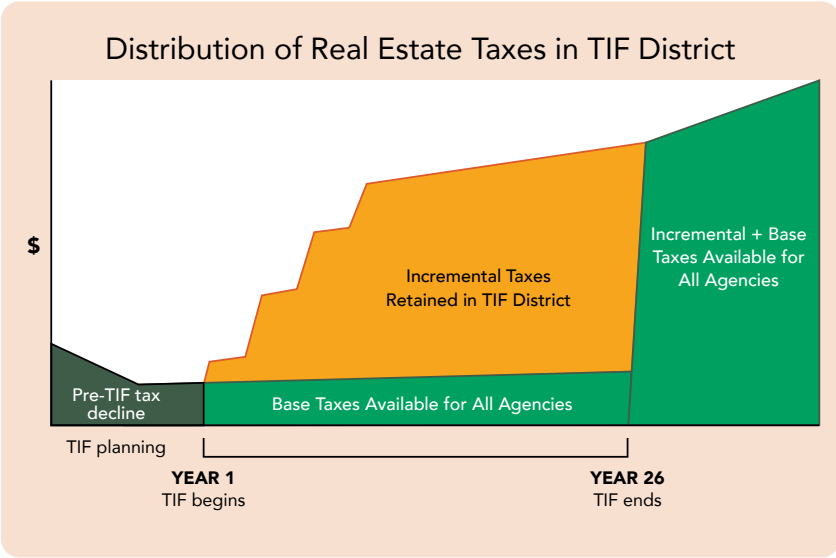
TIF is used in Edina for two basic purposes: to attract new development at a superior quality or scale than would otherwise occur; and to finance public infrastructure related to the development such as new or improved streets, sidewalks, utilities or parking structures, the cost of which might otherwise hinder

the feasibility of the project or might be borne by all taxpayers through the City’s general tax levy.

“When TIF is used, the new tax revenue collected from a new project stays in the immediate area to fund the local improvements,” Neuendorf said. “This way, the entire community is able to use and enjoy the new roads and sidewalks but isn’t stuck paying for them directly.”

Incremental taxes collected from new projects are kept separate from the City’s general budget. TIF is administered by the City’s Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA), whose Board of Commissioners consists of the Mayor and members of the City Council.

“While the City Council and HRA work together to create TIF districts, the HRA is solely responsible for overseeing how incremental taxes are spent,” said Finance Director Eric Roggeman. “TIF doesn’t go into the City’s General Fund, and there are strict limits set by State law regarding what incremental taxes can be used for. Some TIF districts have special legislation that only apply to that district. Every TIF project and expenditure is different.” To add to the complexity, each TIF district is subject to the laws that are in place at the time the district is established.



How Has Edina Used TIF?

“Over Edina’s history, there are many TIF success stories to tell – including Centennial Lakes Park, Edinborough and Grandview 1,” Neuendorf said. “The original Grandview 1 District was about 65 acres. It was established in 1984 to redevelop an aging industrial area that the City was concerned would become blighted if it continued on its declining trajectory.”

When established, Grandview 1 was predominately light industrial and commercial uses surrounded by single-family homes, Our Lady of Grace Church and Jerry’s Foods. Neuendorf explained that a major deciding factor in using TIF for private development is the “but-for” test – a conclusion that the desired level of private investment will not occur *but for* the use of TIF to fund extraordinary costs.

According to Minnesota TIF law, a municipality must also make “but-for” findings prior to approval of the TIF Plan. The Council must find that the desired level of private investment and subsequent increase in market value wouldn’t occur without the use of TIF.

“The City took the lead and acquired some of the properties, razed the buildings and cleaned up environmental contamination. The City then worked with two private developers to construct a mixture of public and private buildings. The final products include the high-profile Grandview Square office building, condominiums, the Edina Library branch, Senior Center

and community park,” Neuendorf said.

In addition to the physical improvements that can be used and enjoyed by the whole community, the original Grandview 1 TIF District resulted in an 832 percent increase of tax base within the district boundaries. By comparison, the City’s entire tax base grew by 13 percent over the same 26-year period.

“When the TIF District was terminated in 2010, the entire tax base became available to all taxing agencies – thus spreading out the tax burden so that each taxpayer is responsible for a slightly lower share of the public expenses,” Neuendorf said.

Pentagon Park is another underperforming area where the City is hoping for similar results. Consisting of 42 acres of privately owned land, these properties lag behind the surrounding commercial areas at Normandale Lakes and on France Avenue. The Pentagon Park TIF District was established in 2014 as part of a public/private partnership to revive the struggling properties. As part of the agreement with the property owner, up to \$54 million of future property taxes could potentially be used to fund public roadway improvements, structured parking and other qualifying site improvements.

“In 2007, Pentagon Park’s assessed value peaked at about \$67 million. When the properties fell into foreclosure in 2008 and 2009, the value plummeted to less than half that,” Neuendorf said. Meanwhile, surrounding property values continued to grow. “It was important for the City to step in because a transformational change was strongly preferred. Even if the value stopped declining, we don’t want this highly desirable site to stagnate near the bottom, at its lowest value ever.”

Neuendorf said that any owner could lease space to low-rent tenants to reoccupy the buildings and generate revenue, but that doesn’t help the City nor does it help increase the property’s value. “We want good employers, growing businesses and firms at the top of their fields back in this property. Good jobs, good wages, profitable and successful businesses – that’s what is best for the City’s long-term economic health,” he said.

Since 2014, Hillcrest Development has worked to stabilize a few of the vacant buildings in Pentagon Park and has razed others to have a “shovel ready” site available. These investments have resulted in a slight increase in the property value. The developer continues to work on larger-scale redevelopment plans Neuendorf thinks will help drive the value much higher than its previous peak.

After the TIF is Over

Once a TIF district expires, the properties’ full increased values are put back on the general tax rolls. As for any leftover money from the district, its future is determined by the HRA in accordance with State law.

“Any leftover money could be spent within the project area on eligible costs, or it could be sent back to the County and divided among the taxing districts,” Roggeman said.

The duration of a TIF District varies from 8 to 26 years depending on the goals established by the State law and the community.

“The City wants to continue to see Edina prosper and succeed,” Neuendorf said. “TIF is a good tool we have in our back pocket to help this happen and to make major redevelopments and investments in the community even more appealing.”


For more information, visit EdinaMN.gov/TIF, or contact Neuendorf at bneuendorf@EdinaMN.gov.

By the Numbers: Revenue Streams that Support City Operations

City operations are funded by property taxes and several other revenue streams.

20

Utility sales for water and sewer make up 20 percent of the City's annual revenue.



2

The City has a two-year operating budget and five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

7

The City has seven categories for the revenues it receives: taxes, utility sales, liquor sales, park enterprise sales, licenses and permits, special assessments and "all others."

5

Five percent of the City's revenue comes from licenses and permits.



\$9,256,900

Amount of revenue that comes from sales at park enterprises such as Braemar Golf Course, Edina Aquatic Center and Edinborough Park.



\$12,462,387

Amount of revenue that comes from Edina Liquor sales, which makes up 13 percent of the City's overall revenue.

File photos

Edina TV to be offered on CenturyLink's PRISM in July

Edina residents now have a choice for cable TV.

In 2015, the City approved a franchise agreement with CenturyLink that will give Edina residents an alternative to Comcast, which had been Edina's only cable provider for years.

Along with telephone and high-speed internet, CenturyLink will soon be adding its cable service, PRISM TV, to its list of services. CenturyLink's goal is to reach 15 percent of the city with PRISM TV within the next two years.

CenturyLink will provide public and education channels in a mosaic format on Channel 26. Edina residents will find the channels grouped together on one menu-style channel along with other metro area public and education channels. The City's government channel – Edina TV – will have its own channel number – 236 – that will be grouped along with other news providers such as CNN.

Edina TV will be available on CenturyLink July 21. The public and education access channels will be on CenturyLink in November.

Edina TV broadcast schedule for Comcast channels 16 and 813 and CenturyLink channel 236 is:

- Edina City Council**
(shown until the next scheduled meeting)
- Sundays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
 - Tuesdays – 7 p.m. (live broadcast on second and third Tuesdays of every month)
 - Wednesdays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
 - Saturdays – 7 p.m.

- Planning Commission**
(shown until the next scheduled meeting)
- Wednesdays – 7 p.m. (live broadcast on second and fourth Wednesdays of every month)
 - Thursdays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
 - Fridays – 7 p.m.
 - Saturdays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.

- Community Health Commission**
(shown until July 10)
- Sundays – 10 p.m.
 - Mondays – 6 a.m., 2 p.m.
 - Friday – 10 p.m.
 - Saturdays – 6 a.m., 2 p.m.

- 4th of July Parade**
(airs live and is shown from July 4 to July 31)
- Monday, July 4 – live broadcast at 10 a.m.
 - Mondays – 7 p.m.
 - Tuesdays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
 - Thursdays – 7 p.m.
 - Fridays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.

- Transportation Commission**
(shown from July 21 to Aug. 17)
- Sundays – 7 p.m.
 - Mondays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
 - Wednesdays – 10 p.m.
 - Thursdays – 6 a.m., 2 p.m.

- Agenda: Edina**
(new episode on the 1st and 15th of each month)
- Daily at 2:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:30 p.m.

- Beyond the Badge**
(new episode on the 1st of each month)
- Daily at 2 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m.

- Enterprise Edina**
(new episode produced periodically)
- Daily at 2:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 6:15 p.m.

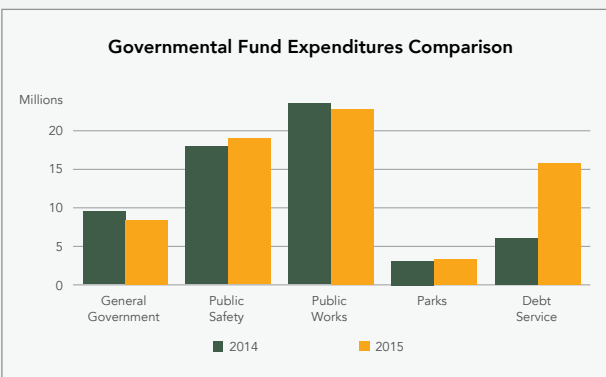
- On The Job**
(new episode on the 15th of each month)
- Daily at 1:45 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 5:45 p.m.

- Rotary Club of Edina Meetings**
(new episode weekly)
- Daily at 1 a.m., 9 a.m., 5 p.m.

Governmental Funds

Governmental Fund Expenditures

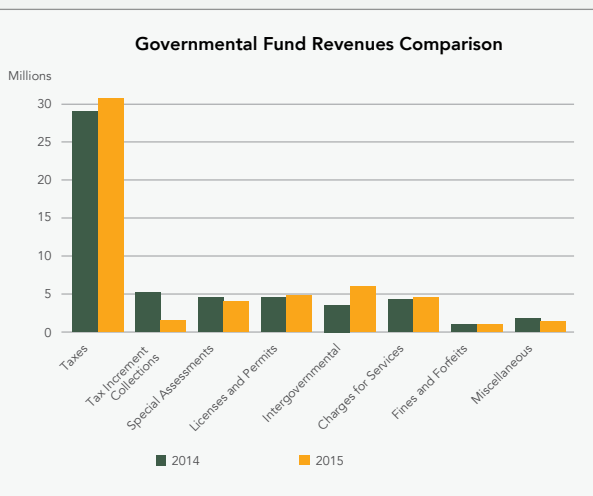
	2014	2015		
General Government	\$9,584,416	\$8,807,816	\$776,600	92%
Public Safety	\$17,571,969	\$19,135,320	(\$1,563,351)	109%
Public Works	\$24,940,212	\$24,138,356	\$801,856	97%
Parks	\$3,603,413	\$3,701,875	(\$98,462)	103%
Debt Service	\$6,020,022	\$15,651,988	(\$9,631,966)	260%
	\$61,720,032	\$71,435,355	(\$9,715,323)	116%



Detailed in the graphs provided are the 2014 and 2015 total revenues and expenditures for all the governmental funds. Expenditures are presented by function, while revenues are presented by category. At the end of the current fiscal year, revenues and expenditures totaled \$71,435,355 and \$55,956,901, respectively, for an overall decrease in fund balance before other financing sources of \$15,478,454. Expenditures came in 16%, or \$9,715,323 higher than 2014. The increase in expenditures can be attributed mostly to debt service expenditures; specifically the general obligation refunding bond, series 2014B that was issued in 2014 in the amount of \$12,720,000 and refunded \$16,825,000 of bonds in early 2015. Refunding bonds are issued by the City to take advantage of lower interest rates due to changes in economic conditions, resulting in cost savings for the City. In this case, the refunding lowered the City's debt service payments by \$933,960 and resulted in an economic gain of \$915,095. Revenues came in 3%, or \$1,440,699 higher than 2014. The majority of the increase can be attributed to higher property taxes to fund the new sports dome (Braemar Field), increased license and permit revenue as a result of continued residential and commercial redevelopment, and increased intergovernmental revenue (State aid maintenance) received for various infrastructure projects, most notably the 54th street bridge and street repair. Adversely, tax increment collections decreased from \$5,052,705 in 2014 to \$1,792,896 in 2015 due to a decertified district. Taxes, which are made up of property, franchise, and lodging taxes, remain a heavily relied on revenue source for governmental operations, making up 57% of all governmental fund revenues.

Governmental Fund Revenues

	2014	2015		
Taxes	\$29,055,190	\$31,647,024	(\$2,591,834)	109%
Tax Increment Collections	\$5,052,705	\$1,792,896	\$3,259,809	35%
Special Assessments	\$4,606,010	\$4,132,128	\$473,882	90%
Licenses and Permits	\$4,583,183	\$4,907,364	(\$324,181)	107%
Intergovernmental	\$3,961,509	\$6,093,966	(\$2,132,457)	154%
Charges for Services	\$4,270,720	\$4,414,991	(\$144,271)	103%
Fines and Forfeits	\$1,163,907	\$1,195,271	(\$31,364)	103%
Miscellaneous	\$1,822,978	\$1,773,261	\$49,717	97%
	\$54,516,202	\$55,956,901	(\$1,440,699)	103%



Braemar Golf Course Makes Turnaround

The finances of the City's golf operation have turned around.

The Parks & Recreation Department's goal is to recover all of the costs of its golf operations. In 2015, it came close with 99.1 percent of costs recovered. That's impressive since a six-step strategy for the City's golf operation was laid out by Ann Kattreh, Parks & Recreation Director, just a few years back in 2013.

In 2013, the City's golf operation ran a deficit in excess of \$400,000. That was the fourth year in a row of operating losses. Braemar's losses in 2014 were \$71,196. In 2015, Braemar was able to close the gap to \$25,413.

The first step was to narrow the scope of the City's golf operations. That meant closing Fred Richards Executive Golf Course in October 2014.

"There was a lot of sentimental relationships with Fred Richards – residents grew up learning golf on Fred Richards – and it's hard to get past the emotion," said Joe Abood, General Manager of Braemar Golf Course. "But if you look at the pure financials of the situation, it was the right thing to do."

Fred Richards was simply under producing. Though there are now fewer holes of golf for the City to maintain, Braemar is bringing in about the same amount of revenue. "So, that meant we had too many holes of golf for the amount of playing in the city of Edina," said Abood of the golf operation before Fred Richards was closed.

"We feel the performance we have had since Fred Richards closed in 2014 really does show that the information and projections we made were correct," said Kattreh.

The second step was to invest in improvements at Braemar Golf Course. The interior and exterior of the clubhouse were remodeled and Tin Fish restaurant



Braemar Golf Course's driving range will be moving off the tee mats and onto the turf in August.

opened in the former grill space. In April, a renovated driving range opened. In August, a new Par 3 course, the Academy 9, will open. The City Council last June approved the Braemar Golf Course Master Plan, which includes rebuilding Braemar's 27 holes into a better 18-hole course.

"The driving range is our greatest asset and it sees the most traffic. We have the ability to stage it where by the time an area gets beat up, you will move back, giving time for the grass to regenerate and grow. We'll have pristine grass-hitting conditions throughout the year as opposed to just the first two months of the spring," said Abood.

Construction on the new 18-hole course will begin in October with an expected opening date of April 2018.

"It's hard for us to think that we are displacing our valued golfers – these are golfers that have been golfing at Braemar for a long, long time and new golfers who are coming in. We hate to send anyone away," said Kattreh.

"It's tough to shut down when things are starting to go well," said Abood. "But if we want to be healthy, we have to improve our core product."

By rebuilding the 18 holes in the 27-hole footprint,

property not used for golf will be used for other park purposes. Kattreh says right now that unused portion of land is being considered for a potential winter recreation area at Braemar that could offer a wide variety of winter recreation activities such as snow tubing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The Parks & Recreation Department is continually working on the remaining steps in the six-step strategy: modifying prices and discounts, outsourcing ancillary services, improving customer service, and marketing.

"It's our goal to make Braemar Park, which is the largest park in the park system, more than just golf. We want all residents to feel that there is something for them to do there," Kattreh said.

Braemar Golf Course was 50 years old last year. "We had a beautiful piece of property and a nice golf course, but we had an infrastructure that was really wearing out. The improvements that we are making on the golf course are going to set this golf enterprise up for several decades for people to enjoy and financially we are setting ourselves up for the position of being able to afford to make improvements as needed in the future," Kattreh said. "We are generally feeling very positive about all of the change that is occurring at the golf course."

Council Member Ann Swenson said, "We have been working on this for a long time and I'm pleased with what happened on the financials for the past year on the golf course. That gives me great hope."

When all of the projects are finished, Braemar Golf Course is anticipated to generate \$230,000 in operating income by 2020. The City expects complete cost recovery, including those for renovations, once complete.

For more information, contact Abood at 952-903-5754 or jabood@EdinaMN.gov.

Pamela Park Improvements Enjoyed by Community

Residents and visitors are enjoying improvements to one of Edina’s busiest parks.

When no updates had been made in nearly a decade and conditions had deteriorated, Pamela Park, 4303 W. 58th St., was due for much-needed improvements.

“We have an incredible park system for a city the size of Edina. The assets that we have are really great, but some of the assets are aging. It’s important that we continue to improve and update these parks to keep everything safe and in great working condition for the residents. This gave us the opportunity to make a significant investment in a park that hadn’t had a lot of work for many years,” said Parks & Recreation Director Ann Kattreh.

The \$3.2 million renovation project took about a year to complete. The project was funded from revenue bonds that also went toward improvements at Braemar Arena. Renovations include a new shelter building; the conversion of the north field to a sand peat field; the addition of trails around the park; and the expansion of the parking lots on the north, west and south sides of the park.

Because of the numerous athletic facilities on the property, including two soccer fields, three tennis courts, three baseball fields and an ice rink used in the winter months, Pamela Park is one of the most used parks in the community.

“We’ve already visited the park twice this week, so we come here a lot,” said resident ViAnne Hubbell.

To add to the sporting amenities, one of the 2015 updates included changing the senior lighted field to an artificial turf field, which has garnered more use than anticipated.



Photo by Dana Rademacher

Many organizations use the artificial turf field through the year, including the Skyhawks Sports Academy, whose coaches here prepare for a flag football camp.

which I like, and when something isn’t going on there, you can use the field for small pick-up games,” said Hubbell.

The Parks & Recreation Department has seen an increase in attendance at Pamela Park, amongst both neighboring residents and those in other areas of Edina, due to these improvements, particularly with the brand new shelter building. The shelter includes restroom facilities, a fireplace, a kitchenette and work space, as well as a room for the community to use for neighborhood gatherings and special occasion rentals.

“It’s a beautiful facility. Our skaters loved it in the winter, and we have seen more shelter rentals for birthday parties and graduation parties,” Faus said. Another amenity heavily enjoyed by park goers has been the new, one-mile asphalt walking trail. Faus says that additional walking paths are some of the most desired amenities for Edina residents.

“We’ve seen a lot more people walking through Pamela Park, enjoying meandering through some of the new trails. Every time we look at doing any type of master plans for future parks, we definitely look at adding places where people can connect from the neighborhoods to the parks.”

For more information on the improvements, contact Faus at sfaus@EdinaMN.gov or 952-826-0431.

City Hires Intermedix for Ambulance Billing

Since January, the City has worked with a new ambulance billing vendor that makes it easier for patients to pay bills.

Intermedix is a Florida-based company that has been contracted for five years to handle all of the City’s ambulance billing. They began work Jan. 1.

In the letter of proposal, Intermedix wrote, “We process more than 3.6 million EMS patient encounters and collect more than \$1 billion for our EMS clients every year. Our database runs each account against every EMS patient in our database, all hospital data, all prior patient linkage, all patient information maintained by our Emergency Department billing database – more than 30 million records nationwide.”

Intermedix offers a lot more services and they fit the needs of the City better than the previous vendor, with which the City had worked for more than 15 years. “They are used to handling high-volume types of operations and they can generate more reporting and analytics,” said Ruth Schmoll, the Fire-Rescue & Inspections Department’s Administrative Assistant.

Intermedix’s services include a patient portal, which allows patients to enter their insurance information and make payments online. Intermedix has varying methods of collecting insurance information without direct patient interaction.

Intermedix will also improve the Finance Department’s workflow by having the bank directly handle the payments and various correspondence received from patients. Before, the City’s financial staff would have to process individual payment receipts sent to City Hall, which could take up to an hour a day to go through.

Now U.S. Bank maintains a Post Office box and manages things through a lockbox process. All the documents and money deposits are scanned to the lockbox and deposits go directly to the City’s bank account. There is an electronic portal where an Intermedix representative downloads all the information from the lockbox on a daily basis. They are instantly able to update payments, patient information and insurance information.

“That takes all the mail related to ambulance bills away from City Hall,” said Assistant Finance Director Kyle Sawyer, “which is a big internal staff savings.

“The patient benefit is that their payment gets posted immediately, and they can now make a payment using a credit card and the patient portal. The City received a lot of requests in the past to take credit card payments.”

In addition to the more robust services offered, Intermedix allows City staff access to patient data and payment information through an online dashboard, as well as internet-based training modules on documentation and compliance for the City’s EMS staff.

Intermedix has more than 37 years of experience in EMS billing, with 95 percent of their clients being municipalities. Intermedix provided the best value to the City with a very high level of service and a low fee of 3.5 percent of net collections.

For more information, contact Sawyer at 952-826-0420 or ksawyer@EdinaMN.gov.

Veterans Memorial Constructed in Utley Park

The City held a ceremony in May 2015 to dedicate the Edina Veterans Memorial to the 33 Edina veterans who gave their lives in the line of duty. The Memorial is located in Utley Park at the corner of Wooddale Avenue and 50th Street.

Gladys Willmes attended the dedication ceremony to pay respect to her brother, veteran Bernard Johnson. “I remembered him as a kind and gentle person; he’d do anything for anybody without anything in return. He was in the Army and he was in the tank destroyers, and he was just really happy to go,” she said. “It’s very touching to think that, here in this little town that I grew up in, that they would honor all these boys.”

The memorial consists of a v-shaped granite plaza, emblematic of “victory,” leading up to an eagle and flag design above a wall featuring the names of past Edina soldiers who gave their lives in service to the United States since Edina’s founding. Three illuminated flagpoles are located at the edge of the plaza hoisted with the American flag, State flag and a white-on-black prisoner of war flag to honor troops in captivity or missing in action.

“We want to thank the community, individual donors, the Edina Community Foundation, the City of Edina, the State of Minnesota and any other individuals who have helped to make this memorial possible,” said Veterans Memorial Committee Chair Richard Olson, who received a Mayor’s Commendation for his work on the project. “This memorial is dedicated to the American fathers, sons, mothers and daughters who have served our country and continue to serve our country and those that have died defending our country.”

The Veterans Memorial Committee organized fundraising for the memorial and reached its goal of \$450,000 through the contributions of private donors, community organizations and state grants. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on Sept. 19, 2014, and the Memorial was officially dedicated on Memorial Day in 2015.

“I thought [the memorial] was outstanding. I think that veterans need recognition for what they’ve done and what they sacrificed. We don’t need it, but it feels good when we see it. People don’t have to say thank you, but we appreciate it,” said retired Army Chief Warren Officer 5 Ron Peterson, an Edina resident who made a donation for the project. “I watched it during the construction phases. The visibility you get from 50th when it’s lit up at night – I look at it and I’m proud of it. I’m proud to be a veteran and I’m proud to live in Edina.”

“The veterans who have served in the wars are passing away at an alarming rate right now. It was important that we get this done so we can honor the World War II and Korean veterans,” said Olson. “It’s a moving tribute.”

“When we think about the 33 from Edina and we look at their names carved in stone, those aren’t numbers, those



Photo by Lauryn Grimes

Gladys Willmes attended the Veterans Memorial Dedication Ceremony last summer to pay respect to her brother, Edina resident and veteran, Bernard Johnson.

were young American people. Every one of them had a family; every one of them had friends who mourned for them,” said Retired U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Dennis Schulstad at the dedication ceremony.

The Committee is still collecting donations for ongoing maintenance of the memorial. Donations can be sent to the Edina Community Foundation, 5280 Grandview Square, or made online.

For more information about the project or to donate, visit EdinaMN.gov/veteransmemorial or contact Tom Shirley, staff liaison to the Committee, at 952-833-9582 or tshirley@EdinaMN.gov.

Honoring the Fallen

The Veterans Memorial in Utley Park recognizes 33 Edina veterans who have fallen in the line of duty:

1. Robert Stanley Adams, Jr.
2. Owen Baird
3. Barrette Baker
4. William Parker Bates
5. Paul Christensen
6. Ed Christl
7. LeRoy Coaty
8. Harry Davis
9. Eric Craig Egge
10. Frank Ellis
11. John Entriiken
12. Donald Hale
13. Warren Halvorson
14. Wes Hansord
15. Leo Hawkinson
16. Donald Grant Hill
17. Lars Peter Hustad
18. Alfred Bernard Johnson
19. Rollie Klatt
20. Hill Larson
21. Paul Latham, Jr.
22. Henry Mickelsen
23. Charles Douglas Prescott
24. David Peterson
25. Robert Bruce Randall
26. Joseph Redpath
27. Hoyt Ross
28. Elmer Sherman
29. Leo Slavin
30. Gordon Soderbeck
31. Walt Strubel
32. Hal Thorsen
33. Bud Williams



Photo by Dawn Willis

John Brooks, City of Edina Paramedic/Firefighter, enters patient data on an ambulance.



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